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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 130925836-4174-02]

RIN 0648-XD451

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by
Catcher/Processors using Trawl Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of
Alaska

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS is prohibiting retention of Pacific cod by catcher/processors using
trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA). This action is
necessary because the 2014 total allowable catch of Pacific cod apportioned to trawl
catcher/processors in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached.

DATES: Effective 1200 hours, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), August 19, 2014, through 2400
hours, A.l.t., December 31, 2014.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Josh Keaton, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the
GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for
Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery
Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation

and Management Act. Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679. Regulations governing sideboard protections for GOA groundfish fisheries appear at subpart B of 50 CFR part 680.

The 2014 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to catcher/processors using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA is 1,638 metric tons (mt), as established by the final 2014 and 2015 harvest specifications for groundfish of the GOA (79 FR 12890, March 6, 2014).

In accordance with § 679.20(d)(2), the Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) has determined that the 2014 Pacific cod TAC apportioned to catcher/processors using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA has been reached. Therefore, NMFS is requiring that of Pacific cod caught by catcher/processors using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the GOA be treated as prohibited species in accordance with § 679.21(b).

Classification

This action responds to the best available information recently obtained from the fishery. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA (AA), finds good cause to waive the requirement to provide prior notice and opportunity for public comment pursuant to the authority set forth at 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B) as such requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. This requirement is impracticable and contrary to the public interest as it would prevent NMFS from responding to the most recent fisheries data in a timely fashion and would delay the prohibition of retention of Pacific cod by catcher/processors using trawl gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the

GOA. NMFS was unable to publish a notice providing time for public comment because the most recent, relevant data only became available as of August 18, 2014.

The AA also finds good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effective date of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3). This finding is based upon the reasons provided above for waiver of prior notice and opportunity for public comment.

This action is required by § 679.20 and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.

Dated: August 19, 2014.

Alan D. Risenhoover,
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.